

EDITORIAL

In December 2014, under the auspices of a research project funded by the Australian Research Council, a small group of charity law experts from around the common law world met in Melbourne, Australia, to discuss the state of charity law today. One of the aims of the meeting was to set a research agenda that is focused on the key questions and challenges facing charity law in the coming years. The discussions were wide-ranging but by the end of the meeting a clear consensus had emerged: the relation of charity and politics remains, as it has been at least since the case of *Bowman v Secular Society* [1917] AC 406 was decided by the House of Lords just under one hundred years ago, a topic of the greatest significance for charity lawyers everywhere. Not only is charity and politics an important topic, but it is also a topic of unusual complexity, raising questions about the division between public and private, the relation of citizen and state, and the principles and commitments that constitute the bedrock of political communities the world over.

One outcome from the discussions that took place over those two days at Melbourne Law School is the writing and publication of the first six articles that appear in this volume. Five out of the six authors were present at the discussions. A sixth (Dr Darryn Jensen) was invited to contribute to the volume, having been a member of a panel discussion on Political Purposes and Advocacy at the 2015 annual conference of the Charity Law Association of Australia and New Zealand.

I am very grateful to Professor Matthew Harding of Melbourne Law School for helping me to bring these articles together and to Dr Joyce Chia for the editorial assistance that she kindly and ably provided. This was truly a collaborative project across the miles, with each of the authors and Professor Harding agreeing to read and comment upon early drafts of all the papers. I hope that the end products published in this Volume provide readers with a flavour of the rich and meaningful discussions that were held in Melbourne in December 2014.

Debra Morris
Managing Editor

February 2016